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SUBJECT: NORTHERN UGANDA: WHITHER THE PEACE PROCESS?

1. (SBU) Summary: The Chief Mediator of the Juba Peace Process, Government of Southern Sudan Vice President Riek Machar, held a stakeholders' conference in Kampala on November 5 aimed at creating a roadmap for the stalled process between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda (GOU). The conference allowed UN Special Envoy for LRA-Affected Areas, Joachim Chissano, to carry out consultations with the GOU, LRA, donors, northern Ugandans, and Southern Sudanese Government (GOSS) officials. Participants demanded that the LRA stop attacks in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and sign the Final Peace Agreement (FPA) without conditions by November 30. In addition, the stakeholders urged Chissano to continue his role and donors to continue support for the peace process. Machar and Chissano will make a final effort to bring Kony together with his delegation in order to get the LRA leaders' signature on the FPA. We are not holding our breath. End Summary.

STAKEHOLDERS FLOCK TO KAMPALA

2. (SBU) GOSS Vice President and mediator Riek Machar called the parties and other stakeholders together in Kampala on November 5 to discuss the way forward for the peace process. UN Special Envoy Joachim Chissano, who wanted to consult with key constituencies in order to prepare his report to the UNSC, joined Machar. LRA delegation leader Dr. David Matsanga's presence marked the first time he had been to Uganda in 22 years and was not without controversy. Ex-LRA delegation members, who reside in Uganda, complained bitterly that they were excluded. One UN official said that Matsanga's presence in Uganda would help to legitimize him as LRA leader Joseph Kony's designated representative against these detractors. The stakeholders included the parties, observers to the peace process, northern Ugandan leaders, and civil society organizations.

3. (SBU) Machar told the stakeholders that the process of negotiations had ended and that it was important to get Kony to sign the peace agreement. He said that even if Kony does not sign, internally-displaced persons could still return home. He asked that the establishment of the Joint Liaison Group be considered to oversee implementation. He announced that he did not disband the Cessation of Hostilities Monitoring Team (CHMT). Machar said that he decided to keep the structure of the process until Kony signed the agreement. Machar explained that he has not given up on Kony signing the FPA because Kony had never told him or Chissano that he had abandoned the process. Machar said that Kony continues to have difficulties with the International Criminal Court (ICC), but that the FPA is his only way out. Machar said that Matsanga told him that Kony does understand the agreement. Most of the participants condemned LRA attacks in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), including Machar, Chissano, and Ugandan Government lead negotiator Ruhukana Rugunda.

4. (SBU) Gulu District Resident District Commissioner Walter Ochora

said that the stakeholders' conference and the potential meeting in Rikwangba were orchestrated to buy more time for the LRA leader, who is under some military pressure in DRC from the Congolese military and local villagers. Northern Ugandan leaders also were highly critical of Kony's activities. Archbishop Onono, leader of the northern religious leaders for peace, called Matasanga a sinner for representing someone who carried out brutal atrocities. Finally, the GOSS Internal Affairs Minister and the Governor of Western Equatoria criticized their government's failure to protect civilians from the LRA, reading out a list of the attacks in southern Sudan since the beginning of the peace process.

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COMMUNIQUE
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¶5. (SBU) Matsanga refused to sign the communique, drafted at 1:00 a.m. He told P/E Chief that it was not appropriate for one of the parties to sign a document that was meant to be suggestions from stakeholders to the Chief Mediator and Facilitator. However, he also said that he could not be expected to sign a document that criticizes Kony's attacks on civilians in DRC, which the LRA denies carrying out. He claimed that he did read the communique to Kony on the phone and Kony understood what his critics were saying about the recent activities. The communique acknowledged that the LRA had not assembled, that LRA military attacks in the DRC had caused great suffering, that non-implementation of the peace agreement was putting at risk the stability of the affected Great Lakes, and that the mandate of Chissano was coming to an end (December 31). The stakeholders' urged:

--The LRA to stop attacks and unconditionally sign the FPA before

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November 30, assemble, and immediately release the children held captive.

--All parties, the Chief Mediator, Special Envoy, to make necessary arrangements for Kony to sign the agreement for implementation to commence.

--Continuation of Chissano's role in resolving the LRA conflict

--The international community's continued support for the process and implementation of the FPA.

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NEXT STEPS
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¶5. (SBU) A group of donors, led by the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden will likely fund the logistics for a meeting between Kony and his delegation and a signing ceremony, if warranted. President Museveni maintains that he is ready to sign the FPA. A few donors want Museveni to unilaterally sign the document if Kony refuses again. In our view, this would be a mistake because it relieves a source of pressure on Kony and the ball needs to remain in his court.

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COMMENT
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¶6. (SBU) The conference, which was billed as a discussion of new ideas on the way forward, essentially endorsed the old pattern of peace process activity. The added twist is that Machar and Chissano, after Kony has failed to show up to sign the FPA five times, insist that Kony attend a meeting with his delegation in Rikwangba before they, as the Chief Mediator and Facilitator, come to meet the LRA leader. We are not holding our breath that such a meeting will materialize, but stay tuned.